

In the Name of Empress

Chapter 10: Chapter 10: Take a Few Steps

Perhaps it was an illusion, but Roland vaguely felt that Count Sif's tone softened a bit and lost some of its inherent condescension.

After leaving the gown and arranging for the etiquette teacher, Sif bid farewell and departed.

Before leaving, she summoned the post office manager, gave a few instructions, and then boarded the carriage to leave.

Watching Sif depart, Lisa, who was intimidated by Sif's aura and dared not speak, finally seized the opportunity and bit her lip, puzzled, "What status does Miss Sif hold, to have the protection of the Imperial Guard when she goes out?"

"Sister, don't pry into the affairs of important figures."

Roland calmly said, "She is a close confidante of Her Majesty the Empress, and perhaps even an agent handling trivial matters for her, but that doesn't matter."

Lisa shook her head, dispelling the bold and absurd idea, and said with a smile, "Yes, what's most important now is how you transform from a commoner into a gentleman mastering noble etiquette in just half a month."

Lisa's words froze Roland's smile momentarily.

He had long heard about the complexity of nobility etiquette in Sussex.

Nobles speak, act, communicate, and even walk completely differently from ordinary people.

Those intricate details are torment to others but are second nature to them.

Noble demeanor is nurtured.

Becoming nobility over three generations is not just idle talk.

The elegance and noble aura when Miss Sif walked, he feared he could never learn.

Fortunately, he wasn't nobility, so there was no need to be so rigorous; mastering the basic etiquette to avoid faux pas at the royal salon would suffice.

As Roland inwardly lamented, the etiquette teacher Sif arranged for him approached him with elegant steps.

She appeared to be in her forties or fifties, with crow's feet at the corners of her eyes as traces of the years, but one could tell that she had been a beauty in her youth. The years had left her not only with wrinkles but also with grace cultivated over many years.

She just stood there, and the usually lively Lisa was so scared she dared not speak.

A soft yet magnetic voice spoke, "I am Margaret Sue Mary; you can call me Teacher Mary. I have previously served as the etiquette teacher for the Late Emperor Edward, Crown Prince Feino, and the current Empress Sylph."

Roland was filled with respect, realizing she was an etiquette teacher for the Imperial Family.

He regretted being disrespectful.

Oh no, a teacher of this level must be the strict type holding a whip with a stern face, with very rigorous demands, right?

As Roland was venting inwardly, Teacher Mary's soft yet emotionless voice rang out.

"Roland, I have very strict requirements for formal students. But you are different; after all, you are not a noble, so as long as you pass, it's fine."

Roland breathed a sigh of relief and smiled, asking, "What counts as passing?"

"Making even the most discerning people think you are a true noble."

Just that? Alright, alright.

What a joke!

Roland's smile froze in an instant.

This is supposedly not a high requirement?

Seeing Roland's expression, as if wanting to protest but stopping himself, Teacher Mary said softly, "I've never seen Sif... Miss Sif take an ordinary person so seriously."

"Perhaps it's an illusion, but I always feel that your serious study won't be in vain."

Since Teacher Mary spoke to such an extent, Roland naturally wouldn't be pretentious. He adopted a serious expression and respectfully greeted Mary in a student manner.

"I will strive to become the best student, Teacher Mary. When shall we start?"

Margaret was very satisfied with Roland's attitude. She nodded gently and said calmly, "Time is precious; let's start now. For the next two weeks, I will arrange the most rigorous training for you. Four hours every morning, four hours in the afternoon, and optional two to three hours of evening extra practice. Any questions?"

"Rest assured, I will tailor a training plan according to each student's traits, and you will surely withstand it."

With the teacher saying so, what else could Roland say but nod in acceptance?

Fortunately, it's just etiquette learning, though intricate, not too exhausting.

Roland thought silently to himself.

But he soon realized he was too naive.

Margaret was not an ordinary teacher; her training methods were unconventional, directly taking him to the third-floor corridor and softly asked, "Have you received training in combat techniques? Yoga or other body techniques would work too."

"I have received professional knight combat technique training."

Remembering his father's teachings since childhood, Roland silently derided in his heart.

What's so good about being a knight?

His father was an excellent knight, yet perished on the battlefield holding back for the main forces.

Brave and fearless, worthy of a ballad.

Leaving behind a pitiable orphan. Even history books wouldn't record Old Jack with a single word.

Roland felt a slight sense of belonging to the Sussex Empire, but not much.

He didn't mind tasting the benefits from the Empire's expansion, but laying the foundation for the Empire with his life was out of the question.

He was a commoner, not an Empire ruler.

Margaret's words brought back old memories, and Roland fell silent.

Margaret was indeed the most professional etiquette teacher. She didn't ask questions unrelated to the profession, nor did she care why Roland, having received knight training, neither joined the army nor became a professional knight. She merely carefully assessed Roland's body technique level, then pointed her finger at the stair rail.

"Your foundation is good, so it seems your training can be intensified. Get up there."

Roland stared at Margaret in astonishment.

Aren't we training etiquette? Why does it seem like combat training?

"If you can maintain perfect steps on the stair rail, it will be easier on the ground."

It turns out that's the reason.

Though not fully understanding, Roland still accepted the arrangement.

He leapt up skillfully and landed steadily on the stair rail.

Margaret's expression remained unchanged; she stood several steps in front of the rail, chest out, head high, concentrating her spirit, and her whole demeanor instantly transformed.

Just the change in posture and gaze transformed her from a kind middle-aged woman into a perfect specimen of aristocratic demeanor.

Roland's pupils slightly contracted.

At that moment, Margaret's posture seemingly outshone Miss Sif's in nobility.

Or perhaps it was that she inherently possessed a very standard aristocratic aura.

"The modern noble step has gradually evolved over time, its main characteristic being keeping the shoulders and head steady, with consistent and uniform stride rhythm and length. The body movements are natural and graceful, never rigid."

"And most importantly, under any circumstances, one cannot panic or hasten."

"Even if the Tamas River cuts off before you, you must remain unaffected, composed, and natural."

Margaret paused slightly and spoke softly, "Of course, you don't need to be so stringent. You only need to walk with steadiness, grace, and consistency in stride rhythm and length without panic."

"Let's start training."

Margaret demonstrated once.

Roland's eyes were filled with admiration.

No wonder she's the Imperial Family's etiquette teacher; that noble walk was textbook.

Top fashion models he saw before crossing over were utterly lackluster compared to her.

Margaret finished a sequence and looked back at Roland.

Standing on the rail, Roland clapped lightly.

Margaret kept a stern face, initially wanting to scold him a little, but Roland's sincere smile left her unable to harshly criticize him.

A true lady does not refuse genuine praise.

To prevent Roland from becoming overly flattery, she straightened her face and said, "I hope by the end of training you'll earn my applause. Take a few steps for me to see."

"As you command!"

Roland took a deep breath, adjusting his posture according to Margaret's instructed key points, then walked forward.

Though the rail was narrow, maintaining balance wasn't difficult for someone with professional knight training, at least until a flying whip came at him.

Just as Roland began moving forward, Margaret hurled the whip in her hand, targeting Roland's waist.

Roland dodged the whip with a suave turn, slightly proudly tossing a look toward Margaret.

His meaning was clear.

Teacher, wasn't that a show-off?

Indeed it was a show-off, and Margaret coldly said, "Just one slow-moving flying whip already made you forget to maintain your posture; that's a fail, more practice tonight!"

